(a) whether there is any proposal to set up 'Industrial Food Parks' in the country; and

(b) if so, the number of such parks to be opened during the Ninth Five Year Plan alongwith their locations, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY) : (a) and (b) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries does not set up industrial food parks on its own. However, the Ministry operates a plan scheme for providing assistance to joint sector/assisted sector undertakings, cooperatives and private sector undertakings, etc. for setting up of Industrial Food Parks in the country. The scheme is not either location specific or State-specific. The number of such parks to be assisted during the IXth Five Year Plan has not been fixed and it would depend upon the number of feasible proposals received and allocation of funds made for the Ministry.

[English]

Sugar Mills in Karnataka

1033. SHRI P. KODANDA RAMAIAH : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for starting sugar mills in Karnataka cleared during 1996-97, private sector and co-operative sector-wise;

(b) the number of applications rejected indicating the reasons therefor;

(c) the quantum of levy sugar procured in Karnataka during the said period; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to reduce the levy on sugar with a view to improve the financial health of the sugar mills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) During sugar year 1996-97 (October-September) upto 30.6.97, 8 letters of intent were granted for setting up of new sugar mills, 5 in private and 3 in cooperative sector and 22 applications were prima-facie rejected in the State of Karnataka. The prima-facie rejection letters were issued mainly on the grounds ranging from locational angle and/or non-availability of sugarcane, capacity constraints, etc.

(c) As on 15.6.97, a total quantity of 0.54 lakh tonnes of levy sugar has been produced by the sugar mills of the Karnataka State for distribution under Public Distribution System and armed forces/para-millitary forces during 1996-97 season (October-September). The Ministry does not procure sugar from sugar mills but allocates a part of total production for distribution in PDS for armed/ para-military forces to be lifted directly by them against release orders.

(d) At present, there is no proposal to change the prevailing ratio of 40:60 between the levy & free sale sugar. However, to boost up sugar production in the initial period of the ensuing season, it has been decided to allow early crushing incentive for the period 1st October to 15th November, 1997 by way of higher free sale quota at the rate of 72% of the production.

Wood Based Industries

1034. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR :
SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the Rajeshwar Committee report which inter alia say that 2.82 lakh trees are felled annually in the North East region to satiate the demands in wood-based industries in that region;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of such industries functioning there;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to put a stop on these activities and to shift those industries as per recommendations of Rajeshwar Committee; and

(d) the time by which all these industries are likely to be shifted?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) Rajeshwar Committee has estimated that the wood-based industries in North-East Region, to run at their viable capacity, would required felling of 2,82,397 trees per annum. In addition, it has stated that large scale transportation of logs and vaneers also takes place outside the North-East Region. The Committee has observed that such sustained large scale felling of trees would result in a serious environmental and ecological imbalance in the region, with far reaching consequences to the Nation as a whole. Accordingly, it has recommended to the Hon'ble Supreme Court that ban on fellings of trees in all the forests in North-East may continue until further review.

The Committee has indicated that there are 1228 saw mills, 291 saw-cum-vaneer units and 77 plywood factories in North-East Region.

(c) and (d) The report and recommendations of the Committee are under consideration of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.